the efforts of the State Governments with financial and logistic support, like input subsidy to small and marginal farmers, National Agricultural Insurance Scheme, Kisan Credit Card, etc.

Agricultural education at school level

†3333. SHRI P. K. MAHESHWARI: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether a conference of Vice-Chancellors of Agricultural Universities and the scientists concluded recently;

(b) if so, the main issues raised therein;

(c) whether these Vice-Chancellors demanded from Government to start agricultural education at school level and to accord technical education status to agricultural education; and

(d) if so, Government reaction on these demands?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV): (a) Yes, Sir. It was held on 28th & 29th January, 2002.

(b) Issues deliberated included salient achievements in education during Ninth plan, need for reorientation in Tenth Plan with built in support for individual Faculty. Issues related to Statutory powers to ICAR for regulating Standards of agricultural education, introduction of Agricultural education at School level, measures to develop Vocational courses, containing education and out reach programmes were other highlighting features.

(c) Yes, Sir. The issue was deliberated.

(d) (i) It was decided to set up inter-Ministrial co-ordination committee to explore the feasibility of providing Technical/Professional Status to Agricultural education involving Ministry of HRD, Departments of Rural Development, Agriculture & Co-operation & Animal Husbandry.

(ii) State Agricultural Universities are being requested to interact with State Educational Board to look into possibility of making Agriculture as an optional subject at +2 level.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.